



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2002 Volume I: Survival Stories

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## **character traits of survivors of the teenage years**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 02.01.09  
by Amber Stolz

My 'Survivor' Curriculum was developed after watching a student in crisis. After discussing his problems, he picked up a notebook and proceeded to write a rap. Writing allowed him to express the emotions that were overwhelming him. I realized this incident could be expanded upon to help students experiencing similar emotions.

I realized that students could learn from examining characters in current forms of media. The material for this curriculum will be a collection of songs, movies, television shows, poems, short stories, and comic strips, many of which students are familiar with. Through these accessible materials, students will analyze the effectiveness of the character's choices, their traits, and the value of the medium for telling the story.

After students are led through the process of character analysis, they will turn the process inward. Students will have frequent writing assignments; the final assignment will be a project in which students work together to create their own survival story. Students will select the form their story will take.

This curriculum could be modified for any age group. I will be teaching it at a high school level. The skills that will be focused on are analytical thinking as well as proper writing techniques.

(Recommended for English and Character Education, grades 7-12.)

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